

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 01430 111617Z

43

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1799

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1430

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS XF

SUBJ: MRS MEIR ON ISRAEL'S SEARCH FOR PEACE

SUMMARY. MRS MEIR'S PREPARED STATEMENT TO KNESSET MARCH 10 ON PRESENTATION OF HER NEW GOVERNMENT BROKE NO NEW GROUND ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, BUT STATEMENT DID EMPHATICALLY STRESS THAT CENTRAL GUIDELINE OF HER GOVERNMENT WOULD BE CONTINUATION OF SEARCH FOR PEACE WITH NEIGHBORING ARAB COUNTRIES. HER STATEMENT, AS WELL AS DEFMIN DAYAN'S REMARKS (SEPTTEL) DURING KNESSET DEBATE WHICH FOLLOWED MRS MEIR'S PRESENTATION, INDICATE THAT NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE POSITIVE APPROACH IN MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS. FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF HER REMARKS BASED ON OFFICIAL TEXT ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

1. AIM OF NEW GOVERNMENT. MRS MEIR STATED THAT "THIS

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 01430 111617Z

GOVERNMENT...HAS ARISEN ON THE FOUNDATION OF A CLEAR-CUT

POLICY, REGARDING ACTION FOR THE ATTAIMENT OF PEACE WITH EACH OF THE NEIGHBORING STATES AS ITS PRIMARY AIM. THIS PEACE SHOULD ASSURE ISRAEL OF DEFENSIBLE BORDERS...IT SHOULD BE A PEACE THAT SETS AND END TO WARS, ENABLES ALL THE STATES IN OUR REGION TO DEVOTE THEIR RESOURCES TO CONSTRUCTION, CREATIVE ACTIVITY AND WELFARE. IN ORDER TO ATTAIN THIS OBJECTIVE, THE GOVERNMENT'S ENDEAVORS WILL BE DIRECTED TOWARD MAKING THE MOST OF ALL THE POSSIBILITIES AND PROSPECTS INVOLVED IN THE PEACE CONFERENCE INITIATED AT GENEVA." SHE WENT ON TO REITERATE THAT "ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE TO REJECT THE DEMAND FOR A WITHDRAWAL TO THE LINE OF JUNE 4, 1967, WHICH WERE NEVER RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES AND ARE NOT DEFENSIBLE BORDERS."

2. GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE. MRS MEIR SAID THE CONFERENCE "IS IN ITS FIRST STAGES. THE SEPARATION OF FORCES ON THE EGYPTIAN FRONT MUST BE REGARDED AS AN ACHIEVEMENT DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE CONFERENCE. EVENIF THE NEGOTIATIONS MOVE FROM PLACE TO PLACE, THE GENEVA CONFERENCE REMAINS THE BASE WHICH MAKES POSSIBLE THE DISCUSSIONS HELD IN OTHER PLACES AS WELL."

3. DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT. NOTING THAT FINAL STAGE IN SEPARATION OF FORCES AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT HAD JUST BEEN IMPLEMENTED, MRS MEIR SAID THAT CEASEFIRE HAD BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED BY BOTH SIDES AND THAT HINNING OUT OF FORCES HAD BEEN EXECUTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPIRIT AND LETTER OF AGREEMENT. SHE ADDED THAT DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT "REPRESENTS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A FINAL, JUST AND LASTING PEACE. WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT EGYPT IS STILL A LONG WAY FROM ISRAEL'S VISION OF PEACE, BUT IT IS OF POSITIVE SIGNIFICANCE THAT EVEN ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIAN VERSION THIS WAS FIRST STEP TOWARDS PEACE, EVEN IF THE ROAD IS LONG, EVEN IF THERE ARE MANY UPS AND DOWN ON THE WAY."

4. SYRIA. AFTER EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR HIS EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF ISRAELI POWS IN SYRIA, MRS MEIR REITERATED THAT ISRAEL WAS READY TO SEND A SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS SYRIAN-SIRAELI DISENGAGEMENT. AS FOR SECURITY SITUATION ON NORTHERN FRONT, SHE SAID "EVEN TODAY I CANNOT ASSURE THAT WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ABANDONED ITS PREPARATIONS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 01430 111617Z

AND OFFENSIVE. THE DANGER STILL EXISTS AND OUR FORCES ARE DEPLOYED AND PREPARED AS FAR AS IS REQUIRED."

5. NEGOTIATIONS WITH JORDAN AND SEPARATE PALESTINIAN ENTITY. MRS MEIR STATED THAT ISRAEL IS "INTERESTED AT ANY TIME TO CONDUCT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH JORDAN. WE ARE STRIVING TOWARDS A PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN OURSELVES AND JORDAN WHICH WOULD BE BASED ON THE EXISTENCE OF TWO INDEPENDENT STATES--ISRAEL

WITH UNITED JERUSALEM AS HER CAPITAL AND AN ARAB STATE TO THE EAST OF ISRAEL. IN THE NEIGHBORING JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN STATE THE IDENTITY OF THE JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN ARABS COULD FIND EXPRESSION IN PEACE AND NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. ISRAEL REJECTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL SEPARATE ARAB STATE WEST OF THE JORDAN RIVER." MRS MEIR ALSO REITERATED THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITH "TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE DECLARED OBJECTIVE IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL." SHE SAID THAT "NO PEACE AGREEMENT WILL BE CONCLUDED WITH JORDAN IF IT INVOLVES A TERRITORIAL CONCESSION IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA BEFORE WE ASK THE PEOPLE IN NEW ELECTIONS, IF ONE OF THE PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN THE COALITION SO DEMANDS."

6. COMMENT. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT AT A TIME WHEN WEAKENED GOI MIGHT FEEL SUSCEPTIBLE TO INTERNAL PRESSURES TO TAKE HARDLINE POSTURE, MRS MEIR EMPHASIZED THAT CENTRAL GOAL OF HER GOVERNMENT WAS TO STRIVE FOR PEACE WITH NEIGHBORING ARAB COUNTRIES AND DID NOT USE OCCASION TO RECITE LONG LIST OF ISRAELI BARGAINING POSITIONS IN TOUGH TERMS. HER TRIBUTE TO EGYPT'S GOOD FAITH IN IMPLEMENTING DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THIS AS A POSITIVE SIGN FOR FUTURE SHOULD BE SEEN IN SAME LIGHT. LATTER THEME WAS EMPHASIZED BY DAYAN EVEN MORE STRONGLY IN HIS REMARKS DURING KNESSET DEBATE THAT FOLLOWED MRS MEIR'S STATEMENT (SEPTEL). WHILE NEW GOI WILL CONTINUE TO BARGAIN HARD FOR EVERY ADVANTAGE IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING ARAB STATES, MRS MEIR'S STATEMENT, AS WELL AS DAYAN'S REMARKS, SUGGEST THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE POSITIVE APPROACH IN MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS.

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